

PRESS RELEASE

Town of Poughkeepsie Police Chief Thomas Mauro reminds residents to be careful of “scams” with the arrival of spring. Our department has already begun investigating scams, particularly against the elderly. Scams involve driveway paving, general home repair, chimney cleaning, gutter repair and tree trimming.

These scams involve contractors going door to door and either require payment up front and do not do the work or do a poor job and overcharge when the work is completed. The contractor will first request cash for payment, but even if they cannot get cash, they try for a check that is personally made out. Then they will proceed right to the bank to cash it and you will never see them again or reach them by phone.

Most recently, an elderly female agreed to pay \$100 to have two asphalt holes patched after two men stopped by her house soliciting business. Upon completion, the two workers approached the homeowner and demanded \$1,200 for the same work and asked for it in cash for her to get a \$100 discount. Intimidated by the men, the homeowner drove to the bank, followed by the men. The homeowner withdrew \$1,100 for payment and the men left after giving her a generic hand written receipt.

Tips to consider to avoid door-to-door scammers:

- 1) Do not do business with door-to-door sales people, rather seek out the service yourself.
- 2) Contractors should always be able to prove that they have a contractor’s license and insurance.
- 3) Don’t do business on the spot, get references. Don’t be pressured by a limited time or “fantastic deal”.
- 4) Make payment by check (payable to a business name) or credit card and never pay with cash.
- 5) A receipt is worthless unless the business is valid and reputable.
- 6) Don’t be afraid to offend someone by not doing business
- 7) Just because someone seems nice and honest, doesn’t mean they are.
- 8) Read contracts closely, sign them and get a copy of a signed contract before the work is performed.

Anyone soliciting business or selling products door-to door in the Town of Poughkeepsie must obtain a Peddler’s Permit from Town Hall and provide it when soliciting business. If you feel intimidated or uncomfortable, lock your door and call police. Obtain as much information about the solicitor such as personal description, vehicle description and license plate.